DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 987 SP 014 714

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TITLE The Impact of Racial Membership on Teacher/Administrator Attitudes Towards Multicultural Education.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes: Attitude Change: Educational Research: Equal Education: *Multicultural Education: National Surveys: *Racial Attitudes: Research Needs: *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The relationship between teacher and administrator race and attitudes toward the need for multicultural education is explored. A survey querying 410 black and white teachers and administrators reveals an apparent need for a change in attitude on the part of white administrators and, to a lesser degree, white teachers, toward equal education for children belonging to non-white backgrounds and cultures. Results of the survey are presented in statistical form. (Author/LH)

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The Impact of Racial Membership on Teacher/Administrator Attitudes Towards Multicultural Education

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Adherents of multicultural education are aware that teacher/administrator attitudes must change toward a more equal opportunity for the education of minority students; that is, a school atmosphere must be created with program objectives which allow every student of any cultural or ethnic group maximum achievement. Many writers cite the need for attitude change (Carter, 1970; Baty, 1972; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1975; Ramirez, et al., 1975; and Banks, 1977), but literature which offers supportive empirical evidence is scarce. Before studies are undertaken to devise strategies for changing teacher/administrator attitudes, it is wise to first undertake research that determines to what extent the need exists. If the purposes and goals of multicultural education are to be realized, then the attitudes of those responsible for initiating and carrying out the programs must be found to be positive toward the programs; and hence, toward children of different cultures.

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this study was to investigate and provide

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evidence which supports the need for teacher/administrator attitude change toward a more equal opportunity for the education of minority students, thereby establishing the need for research in attitude change strategies. Among the writers who have documented the need for attitude change is Baty (1972) who stated that many efforts during the 1960s focused on improving the opportunities for the "disadvantaged" child. The assumption was that the total defect was in the cognitive abilities that the child brought to the classroom. Very little attention was given to the need for reeducating administrators and teachers to bring about their attitude change toward children of different backgrounds and cultures for whose education they were responsible. Yet, Baty said, such education of children of different cultures and backgrounds cannot have any lasting effects unless a change in attitude and behavior toward minority children is brought about. Coinciding with Baty's beliefs is the recognition today that the problem is one of culturally naive teachers and school administrators who lack the appropriate feelings and attitudes towards children of different ethnicities and cultures.

The writing about the educational dilemma of the Mexican-American, Carter (1970) charged that our schools fail to give these children the credentials, knowledge and skills to enter the higher levels of our society. He called for change in

our schools, but expressed great concern and doubt that educators would act even if they resolved the problem of how to go about it.

Banks (1977) stated that teachers influence students' self-perception in subtle and overt ways. Prejudicial attitudes influence teachers' verbal and non-verbal interactions in the classroom, which prevent children of different backgrounds from receiving the same quality of education as Anglo children. Banks suggested teachers appear to perpetuate dominant societal values and attitudes toward racial and social class groups. He proposed that teachers must acquire more democratic attitudes and values before schools can truly practice racial and social class democracy.

In order to provide empirical data, the present study was undertaken to investigate the attitudes of teachers and administrators toward a more equal opportunity for the education of minority students by analyzing the teacher/administrator responses to four items concerning ethnic groups' perceptions of educational needs. The research hypotheses were that race membership rather than occupation would be a stronger determinant of weak support of four items directly related to multicultural education in the needs assessment (Baptiste, 1977).

Method

The "Ethnic Groups' Survey of Perceptions of Educational

Needs" questionnaire (Baptiste, Tamez, Gay, 1977) was utilized for the study. The purpose of the instrument was to survey nationwide several ethnic groups' perceptions in regard to the quality of education. In a national survey, each of the 46 questionnaire items was rated by the respondent on a Likert type scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree."

The questionnaire was disseminated among 1200 educators throughout the country. Approximately 500 were returned. Of these, 485 were determined to be suitable for analysis. According to ethnicity, the respondents were: Afro-Americans, 274; Anglo-Americans, 136; and Mexican-Americans and others, 75. The latter group was not included in the data analysis because of the comparative low return.

For the present study, four of the items from the questionnaire were selected to be analyzed because they were thought to have direct bearing on multicultural education. Items 1 and 3 were chosen because they were related to the philosophy of multicultural education and were representative of the ideal situation. Items 2 and 4, more practical items, were selected to determine to what extent the respondents actually would be willing to commit themselves to the philosophy and to the implementation of multicultural education programs. The items were:

1. Courses in multicultural education should be among the requirements for certification.
2. School districts should have adequate materials

and resources for teaching about the cultural experiences of ethnic groups.

3. The curriculum should be designed to present ethnic diversity as a value in American society.

4. Materials by and about ethnic groups should be integrated in the regular curriculum.

The questionnaires were divided into groups of Black administrators, White administrators, Black teachers, and White teachers.

Analysis

A multiple regression analysis of the four items from the questionnaire showed that race membership rather than occupation was more indicative of weak support on each item. The research hypotheses were supported on all four items. The significant findings are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. On race, Item 1 produced (F 3/76 - 10.80, $P < .01$); Item 2, (F 3/76 - 17.62, $P < .01$); Item 3, (F 3/76 - 9.82, $P < .01$); Item 4, (F/3/76 - 26.63, $P < .01$). Moreover, Item 2, in Table 2, produced on the interaction (F 3/76 - 6.88, $P < .05$).

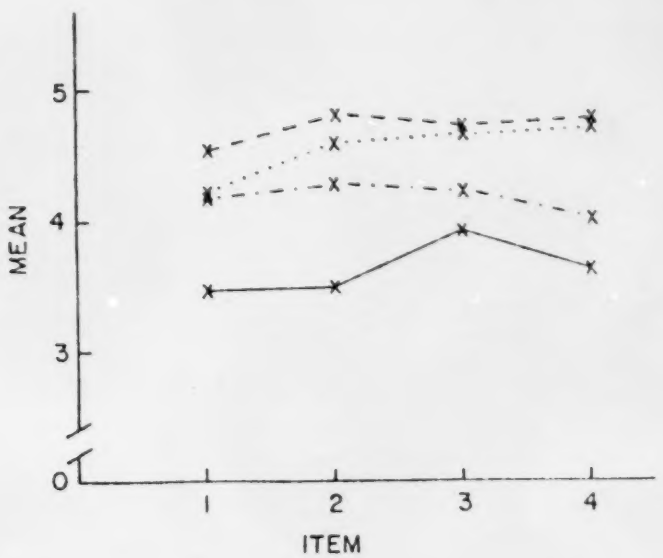
On Item 2 a Scheffe Test of cell means was performed within the significant interaction effect. On Item 2, the White Administrator was revealed as holding the weakest view.

Means of Black teachers, Black administrators, White teachers, White administrators were then calculated. Although only the interaction of occupation and race was statistically significant on one item (#2), White administrators appeared

to lend the least support with White teachers ranking next least supportive on all four items. The sample values are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

SUBGROUP MEANS BY RACE (BLACK AND WHITE) AND OCCUPATION (TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR) FOR ITEMS 1, 2, 3, 4



LEGEND:

X- - - -X BLACK ADMINISTRATOR
X———X WHITE ADMINISTRATOR
X·····X BLACK TEACHER
X- · - ·-X WHITE TEACHER

Table 1

Summary Table of Regression Statistics for Race, Occupation, and Their Interaction on Item 1

	Mult. R	R. Square	RSQ Change	B	Beta	P
Race	.34294	.11761	.11761	.36250	.36250	< .01
Occupation	.38610	.14907	.03146	-.18750	-.17738	n. s.
Race X Occ.	.41558	.17270	.02363	.16250	.15373	n. s.
(Constant)				4.21250		

Table 2

Summary Table of Regression Statistics for Race, Occupation, and Their Interaction on Item 2

	Mult. R	R. Square	RSQ Change	B	Beta	P
Race	.41367	.17112	.17112	.40000	.41367	< .01
Occupation	.44180	.19519	.02406	-.15000	-.15513	n. s.
Race X Occ.	.51189	.26203	.06684	.25000	.25854	< .05
(Constant)				4.30000		

Table 3

Summary Table of Regression Statistics for Race, Occupation, and Their Interaction on Item 3

	Mult. R	R. Square	RSQ Change	B	Beta	P
Race	.33660	.11330	.11330	.30000	.33660	<.01
Occupation	.34124	.11644	.00315	-.05000	-.05610	n. s.
Race X Occ.	.35146	.12352	.00708	.07500	.08415	n. s.
(Constant)				4.42500		

Table 4

Summary Table of Regression Statistics for Race, Occupation, and Their Interaction on Item 4

	Mult. R	R. Square	RSQ Change	B	Beta	P
Race	.50492	.25494	.25494	.47500	.50492	<.01
Occupation	.51117	.26130	.00636	-.07500	-.07972	n. s.
Race X Occ.	.52211	.27260	.01130	.10000	.10630	n. s.
(Constant)				4.30000		

Discussion

From the results, it is apparent that the need for change of attitude on the part of White administrators and White teachers toward a more equal opportunity for the education of children of different backgrounds and cultures was supported. White administrators in particular appeared to lend the weakest support to the items relating to multicultural education.

An additional finding was that three of the four subgroups rated Item 1 the lowest. Perhaps some respondents believed that up to now, a single required course in multicultural education for certification was largely ineffective in bringing about needed attitude change, or that indeed, some White administrators were against such exposure. In either case, a need for the development of a variety of attitude change strategies that are effective is indicated.

The Black administrators and Black teachers in the sample were consistent in their commitment to the implementation on multicultural education as is shown by their mean standings on Items 2 and 4. Although the White Administrators ranked Item 3 the highest, they did not follow through by indicating their willingness to implement the program. The White teachers were willing to accept the district having adequate materials and resources for teaching about the cultural experience of ethnic groups, but they seemed unwilling to go so far as to actually include materials by and about ethnic group members in their curricula as was evidenced by the low ranking of

Item 4.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that if there is to be a real commitment to multicultural education, research needs to be directed toward finding or developing effective strategies for changing teacher/administrator attitudes toward children of other cultures. Special attention may need to be directed towards the attitudes of Anglo administrators so that teachers and other school personnel will be supported in their multicultural education efforts.

Certainly the limited or minimal support of multicultural education as a certification requirement by three of the four subgroups in this study demonstrates that either the teacher training programs must provide potent and viable courses or that the school districts themselves must assume the somewhat awesome responsibility for bringing about the needed changes. Perhaps it is not an either/or situation, but one in which the colleges and the school districts can come together to provide, if not answers, at least some testable hypotheses.

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